



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 863

January Session, 2009

Substitute House Bill No. 6475

House of Representatives, April 30, 2009

The Committee on Judiciary reported through REP. LAWLOR of the 99th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE
CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17a-3 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

3 (a) The department shall plan, create, develop, operate or arrange
4 for, administer and evaluate a comprehensive and integrated
5 state-wide program of services, including preventive services, for
6 children and youths whose behavior does not conform to the law or to
7 acceptable community standards, or who are mentally ill, including
8 deaf and hearing impaired children and youths who are mentally ill,
9 emotionally disturbed, substance abusers, delinquent, abused,
10 neglected or uncared for, including all children and youths who are or
11 may be committed to it by any court, and all children and youths
12 voluntarily admitted to, or remaining voluntarily under the
13 supervision of, the commissioner for services of any kind. Services

14 shall not be denied to any such child or youth solely because of other
15 complicating or multiple disabilities. The department shall work in
16 cooperation with other child-serving agencies and organizations to
17 provide or arrange for preventive programs, including, but not limited
18 to, teenage pregnancy and youth suicide prevention, for children and
19 youths and their families. The program shall provide services and
20 placements that are clinically indicated and appropriate to the needs of
21 the child or youth. In furtherance of this purpose, the department
22 shall: (1) Maintain the Connecticut Juvenile Training School and other
23 appropriate facilities exclusively for delinquents; (2) develop a
24 comprehensive program for prevention of problems of children and
25 youths and provide a flexible, innovative and effective program for the
26 placement, care and treatment of children and youths committed by
27 any court to the department, transferred to the department by other
28 departments, or voluntarily admitted to the department; (3) provide
29 appropriate services to families of children and youths as needed to
30 achieve the purposes of sections 17a-1 to 17a-26, inclusive, as amended
31 by this act, 17a-28 to 17a-49, inclusive, as amended by this act, and
32 17a-51; (4) establish incentive paid work programs for children and
33 youths under the care of the department and the rates to be paid such
34 children and youths for work done in such programs and may provide
35 allowances to children and youths in the custody of the department;
36 (5) be responsible to collect, interpret and publish statistics relating to
37 children and youths within the department; (6) conduct studies of any
38 program, service or facility developed, operated, contracted for or
39 supported by the department in order to evaluate its effectiveness; (7)
40 establish staff development and other training and educational
41 programs designed to improve the quality of departmental services
42 and programs, provided no social worker trainee shall be assigned a
43 case load prior to completing training, and may establish educational
44 or training programs for children, youths, parents or other interested
45 persons on any matter related to the promotion of the well-being of
46 children, or the prevention of mental illness, emotional disturbance,
47 delinquency and other disabilities in children and youths; (8) develop
48 and implement aftercare and follow-up services appropriate to the

49 needs of any child or youth under the care of the department; (9)
50 establish a case audit unit to monitor each area office's compliance
51 with regulations and procedures; (10) develop and maintain a database
52 listing available community service programs funded by the
53 department; (11) provide outreach and assistance to persons caring for
54 children whose parents are unable to do so by informing such persons
55 of programs and benefits for which they may be eligible; and (12)
56 collect data sufficient to identify the housing needs of children served
57 by the department and share such data with the Department of
58 Economic and Community Development.

59 [(b) The department shall prepare and submit biennially to the
60 General Assembly a five-year master plan. The master plan shall
61 include, but not be limited to: (1) The long-range goals and the current
62 level of attainment of such goals of the department; (2) a detailed
63 description of the types and amounts of services presently provided to
64 the department's clients; (3) a detailed forecast of the service needs of
65 current and projected target populations; (4) detailed cost projections
66 for alternate means of meeting projected needs; (5) funding priorities
67 for each of the five years included in the plan and specific plans
68 indicating how the funds are to be used; (6) a written plan for the
69 prevention of child abuse and neglect; (7) a comprehensive mental
70 health plan for children and adolescents, including children with
71 complicating or multiple disabilities; (8) a comprehensive plan for
72 children and youths who are substance abusers, developed in
73 conjunction with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction
74 Services pursuant to the provisions of sections 19a-2a and 19a-7; and
75 (9) an overall assessment of the adequacy of children's services in
76 Connecticut. The plan shall be prepared within existing funds
77 appropriated to the department.]

78 (b) (1) The department, with the assistance of the State Advisory
79 Council on Children and Families, and in consultation with
80 representatives of the children and families served by the department,
81 providers of services to children and families, advocates, and others
82 interested in the well-being of children and families in this state, shall

83 develop and regularly update a single, comprehensive strategic plan
84 for meeting the needs of children and families served by the
85 department. In developing and updating the strategic plan, the
86 department shall identify and define agency goals and indicators of
87 progress, including benchmarks, in achieving such goals. The strategic
88 plan shall include, but not be limited to: (A) The department's mission
89 statement; (B) the expected results for the department and each of its
90 mandated areas of responsibility; (C) a schedule of action steps and a
91 time frame for achieving such results and fulfilling the department's
92 mission that includes strategies for working with other state agencies
93 to leverage resources and coordinate service delivery; (D) priorities for
94 services and estimates of the funding and other resources necessary to
95 carry them out; (E) standards for programs and services that are based
96 on research-based best practices, when available; and (F) relevant
97 measures of performance.

98 (2) The department shall begin the strategic planning process on
99 July 1, 2009. The department shall hold regional meetings on the plan
100 to ensure public input and shall post the plan and the plan's updates
101 and progress reports on the department's web site. The department
102 shall submit the strategic plan to the State Advisory Council on
103 Children and Families for review and comment prior to its final
104 submission to the General Assembly and the Governor. On or before
105 July 1, 2010, the department shall submit the strategic plan, in
106 accordance with section 11-4a, to the General Assembly and the
107 Governor.

108 (3) The commissioner shall track and report on progress in
109 achieving the strategic plan's goals not later than October 1, 2010, and
110 quarterly thereafter, to said State Advisory Council. The commissioner
111 shall submit a status report on progress in achieving the results in the
112 strategic plan, in accordance with section 11-4a, not later than July 1,
113 2011, and annually thereafter to the General Assembly and the
114 Governor.

115 (c) The department shall prepare a plan to keep children who are

116 convicted as delinquent and will be committed to the Department of
117 Children and Families and placed in the Connecticut Juvenile Training
118 School in such facility for at least one year after their referral to the
119 department, which plan shall include provisions for development of a
120 comprehensive approach to juvenile rehabilitation.

121 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 17a-6 of the general statutes is
122 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
123 *1, 2009*):

124 (b) Administer in a coordinated and integrated manner all
125 institutions and facilities which are or may come under the jurisdiction
126 of the department and [may] shall appoint advisory groups for any
127 such institution or facility.

128 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) (a) The facilities that come
129 under the jurisdiction of the Department of Children and Families, as
130 enumerated in section 17a-32 of the general statutes, shall submit an
131 annual report to the State Advisory Council on Children and Families
132 and to their respective advisory groups, established pursuant to
133 subsection (b) of section 17a-6 of the general statutes, as amended by
134 this act. The report shall include, but not be limited to: (1) Aggregate
135 profiles of the residents; (2) a description of and update on major
136 initiatives; (3) key outcome indicators and results; (4) costs associated
137 with operating the facility; and (5) a description of educational,
138 vocational and literacy programs, and behavioral, treatment and other
139 services available to the residents and their outcomes. Each report
140 submitted pursuant to this subsection shall be posted on the
141 department's web site.

142 (b) Such advisory groups shall respond to their facility's annual
143 report, submitted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, and
144 provide any recommendations for improvement or enhancement that
145 they deem necessary.

146 (c) The Department of Children and Families shall serve as
147 administrative staff of such advisory groups.

148 Sec. 4. Section 17a-27f of the general statutes is repealed and the
149 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

150 [(a) The Department of Children and Families shall establish a
151 public safety committee in the municipality in which the Connecticut
152 Juvenile Training School is located. The committee shall be composed
153 of the superintendent of said school and representatives appointed by
154 the chief elected official of the municipality. The committee shall meet
155 not less than quarterly to review safety and security issues which affect
156 the host municipality.]

157 [(b)] At the time the Connecticut Juvenile Training School becomes
158 operational, the Department of Children and Families shall ensure that
159 a community security and alert system shall be functional.

160 Sec. 5. Section 46a-13l of the general statutes is repealed and the
161 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

162 (a) The Child Advocate shall:

163 (1) Evaluate the delivery of services to children by state agencies
164 and those entities that provide services to children through funds
165 provided by the state;

166 (2) Review periodically the procedures established by any state
167 agency providing services to children to carry out the provisions of
168 sections 46a-13k to 46a-13q, inclusive, as amended by this act, with a
169 view toward the rights of the children and recommend revisions to
170 such procedures;

171 (3) Review complaints of persons concerning the actions of any state
172 or municipal agency providing services to children and of any entity
173 that provides services to children through funds provided by the state,
174 make appropriate referrals and investigate those where the Child
175 Advocate determines that a child or family may be in need of
176 assistance from the Child Advocate or that a systemic issue in the
177 state's provision of services to children is raised by the complaint;

178 (4) Pursuant to an investigation, provide assistance to a child or
179 family who the Child Advocate determines is in need of such
180 assistance including, but not limited to, advocating with an agency,
181 provider or others on behalf of the best interests of the child;

182 (5) Periodically review the facilities and procedures of any and all
183 institutions or residences, public or private, where a juvenile has been
184 placed by any agency or department;

185 (6) Recommend changes in state policies concerning children
186 including changes in the system of providing juvenile justice, child
187 care, foster care and treatment;

188 (7) Take all possible action including, but not limited to, conducting
189 programs of public education, undertaking legislative advocacy and
190 making proposals for systemic reform and formal legal action, in order
191 to secure and ensure the legal, civil and special rights of children who
192 reside in this state;

193 (8) Provide training and technical assistance to attorneys
194 representing children and guardians ad litem appointed by the
195 Superior Court;

196 (9) Periodically review the number of special needs children in any
197 foster care or permanent care facility and recommend changes in the
198 policies and procedures for the placement of such children;

199 (10) Serve or designate a person to serve as a member of the child
200 fatality review panel established in subsection (b) of this section; and

201 (11) Take appropriate steps to advise the public of the services of the
202 Office of the Child Advocate, the purpose of the office and procedures
203 to contact the office.

204 (b) There is established a child fatality review panel composed of
205 thirteen permanent members as follows: The Child Advocate, or a
206 designee; the Commissioners of Children and Families, Public Health
207 and Public Safety, or their designees; the Chief Medical Examiner, or a

208 designee; the Chief State's Attorney, or a designee; a pediatrician,
209 appointed by the Governor; a representative of law enforcement,
210 appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate; an attorney,
211 appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; a social work
212 professional, appointed by the minority leader of the Senate; a
213 representative of a community service group appointed by the speaker
214 of the House of Representatives; a psychologist, appointed by the
215 majority leader of the House of Representatives; and an injury
216 prevention representative, appointed by the minority leader of the
217 House of Representatives. A majority of the panel may select not more
218 than three additional temporary members with particular expertise or
219 interest to serve on the panel. Such temporary members shall have the
220 same duties and powers as the permanent members of the panel. The
221 chairperson shall be elected from among the panel's permanent
222 members. The panel shall, to the greatest extent possible, reflect the
223 ethnic, cultural and geographic diversity of the state.

224 (c) The panel shall review the circumstances of the death of a child
225 placed in out-of-home care or whose death was due to unexpected or
226 unexplained causes to facilitate development of prevention strategies
227 to address identified trends and patterns of risk and to improve
228 coordination of services for children and families in the state. Members
229 of the panel shall not be compensated for their services, but may be
230 reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of
231 their duties.

232 (d) On or before January 1, 2000, and annually thereafter, the panel
233 shall issue an annual report which shall include its findings and
234 recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on its
235 review of child fatalities for the preceding year.

236 (e) Upon request of two-thirds of the members of the panel and
237 within available appropriations, the Governor, the General Assembly
238 or at the Child Advocate's discretion, the Child Advocate shall conduct
239 an in-depth investigation and review and issue a report with
240 recommendations on the death or critical incident of a child. The

241 report shall be submitted to the Governor, the General Assembly and
242 the commissioner of any state agency cited in the report and shall be
243 made available to the general public.

244 (f) Any state agency cited in a report issued by the Office of the
245 Child Advocate, pursuant to the Child Advocate's responsibilities
246 under this section, shall submit a written response to the report and
247 recommendations made in the report to the Office of the Child
248 Advocate and, in the case of a report pursuant to subsection (e) of this
249 section, to the child fatality review panel, not later than sixty days after
250 receipt of such report and recommendations. The agency shall also
251 submit a copy of such response to the Governor and the General
252 Assembly. The response shall include, but not be limited to: (1)
253 Proposed corrective actions to address identified problems; and (2) a
254 time frame for implementation of improvements.

255 ~~[(f)]~~ (g) The Chief Medical Examiner shall provide timely notice to
256 the Child Advocate and to the chairperson of the child fatality review
257 panel of the death of any child that is to be investigated pursuant to
258 section 19a-406.

259 ~~[(g)]~~ (h) Any agency having responsibility for the custody or care of
260 children shall provide timely notice to the Child Advocate and the
261 chairperson of the child fatality review panel of the death of a child or
262 a critical incident involving a child in its custody or care.

263 Sec. 6. Section 17a-4 of the general statutes is repealed and the
264 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

265 (a) There shall be a State Advisory Council on Children and
266 Families which shall consist of seventeen members appointed by the
267 Governor, including at least five persons who are child care
268 professionals, two persons aged eighteen to twenty-five, inclusive,
269 served by the Department of Children and Families, one child
270 psychiatrist licensed to practice medicine in this state and at least one
271 attorney who has expertise in legal issues related to children and
272 youth. The balance of the advisory council shall be representative of

273 young persons, parents and others interested in the delivery of services
274 to children and youths, including child protection, behavioral health,
275 juvenile justice and prevention services. No less than fifty per cent of
276 the council's members shall be parents or family members of children
277 who have received, or are receiving, behavioral health services, child
278 welfare services or juvenile services and no more than half the
279 members of the council shall be persons who receive income from a
280 private practice or any public or private agency that delivers mental
281 health, substance abuse, child abuse prevention and treatment, child
282 welfare services or juvenile services. Members of the council shall
283 serve without compensation, except for necessary expenses incurred in
284 the performance of their duties. The Department of Children and
285 Families shall provide the council with funding to facilitate the
286 participation of those members representing families and youth, as
287 well as for other administrative support services. Members shall serve
288 on the council for terms of two years each and no member shall serve
289 for more than two consecutive terms. The commissioner shall be an ex-
290 officio member of the council without vote and shall attend its
291 meetings. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings
292 or fifty per cent of all meetings during any calendar year shall be
293 deemed to have resigned. The council shall elect a chairperson and
294 vice-chairperson to act in the chairperson's absence.

295 (b) The council shall meet quarterly, and more often upon the call of
296 the chair or a majority of the members. The council's meetings shall be
297 held at locations that facilitate participation by members of the public,
298 and its agenda and minutes shall be posted on the department's web
299 site. A majority of the members in office, but not less than six
300 members, shall constitute a quorum. The council shall have complete
301 access to all records of the institutions and facilities of the department
302 in furtherance of its duties, while at all times protecting the right of
303 privacy of all individuals involved, as provided in section 17a-28.

304 (c) The duties of the council shall be to: (1) Recommend to the
305 commissioner programs, legislation or other matters which will
306 improve services for children and youths, including behavioral health

307 services; (2) annually review and advise the commissioner regarding
308 the proposed budget; (3) interpret to the community at large the
309 policies, duties and programs of the department; [and] (4) issue any
310 reports it deems necessary to the Governor and the Commissioner of
311 Children and Families; (5) assist in the development of and review and
312 comment on the strategic plan developed by the department pursuant
313 to subsection (b) of section 17a-3, as amended by this act; (6) receive on
314 a quarterly basis from the commissioner a status report on the
315 department's progress in carrying out the strategic plan; (7)
316 independently monitor the department's progress in achieving its
317 goals as expressed in the strategic plan; and (8) offer assistance and
318 provide an outside perspective to the department so that it may be able
319 to achieve the goals expressed in the strategic plan.

320 Sec. 7. Subsection (a) of section 17a-22b of the general statutes is
321 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
322 *1, 2009*):

323 (a) Each community collaborative shall, within available
324 appropriations, (1) complete a local needs assessment which shall
325 include objectives and performance measures, (2) specify the number
326 of children and youths requiring behavioral health services, and (3)
327 specify the number of children and youths actually receiving
328 community-based and residential services and the type and frequency
329 of such services. [, and (4) complete an annual self-evaluation process
330 and a review of discharge summaries.] Each community collaborative
331 shall submit its local needs assessment to the Commissioner of
332 Children and Families and the Commissioner of Social Services.

333 Sec. 8. Section 17a-145 of the general statutes is repealed and the
334 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

335 No person or entity shall care for or board a child without a license
336 obtained from the Commissioner of Children and Families, except: (1)
337 When a child has been placed by a person or entity holding a license
338 from the commissioner; (2) any residential educational institution
339 exempted by the state Board of Education under the provisions of

340 section 17a-152; (3) residential facilities licensed by the Department of
341 Developmental Services pursuant to section 17a-227; (4) facilities
342 providing child day care services, as defined in section 19a-77; or (5)
343 any home that houses students participating in a program described in
344 subparagraph (B) of subdivision (8) of section 10a-29. The person or
345 entity seeking a child-care facility license shall file with the
346 commissioner an application for a license, in such form as the
347 commissioner furnishes, stating the location where it is proposed to
348 care for such child, the number of children to be cared for, in the case
349 of a corporation, the purpose of the corporation and the names of its
350 chief officers and of the actual person responsible for the child. The
351 Commissioner of Children and Families is authorized to fix the
352 maximum number of children to be boarded and cared for in any such
353 home or institution or by any person or entity licensed by the
354 commissioner. [Each person or entity holding a license under the
355 provisions of this section shall file annually, with the commissioner, a
356 report stating the number of children received and removed during
357 the year, the number of deaths and the causes of death, the average
358 cost of support per capita and such other data as the commissioner
359 may prescribe.] If the population served at any facility, institution or
360 home operated by any person or entity licensed under this section
361 changes after such license is issued, such person or entity shall file a
362 new license application with the commissioner, and the commissioner
363 shall notify the chief executive officer of the municipality in which the
364 facility is located of such new license application, except that no
365 confidential client information may be disclosed.

366 Sec. 9. Section 17a-37 of the general statutes is repealed and the
367 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

368 (a) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish a
369 school district within the Department of Children and Families, for the
370 education or assistance of any child or youth who resides in or receives
371 day treatment at any state-operated institution or facility within that
372 department and whose needs require that his education be provided
373 within the institution in which he resides or at which he receives day

374 treatment. The school district shall be known as State of Connecticut-
375 Unified School District #2. The Commissioner of Children and
376 Families shall administer, coordinate and control the operations of the
377 school district and shall be responsible for the overall supervision and
378 direction of all courses and activities of the school district and shall
379 establish such vocational and academic education, research and
380 statistics, training and development services and programs as he
381 considers necessary or advisable in the best interests of the persons
382 benefiting therefrom. The commissioner or his designee shall be the
383 superintendent of said district and shall act in accordance with the
384 applicable provisions of section 10-157.

385 (b) The superintendent of the school district shall have the power to
386 (1) establish and maintain within the Department of Children and
387 Families such schools of different grades as he may from time to time
388 require and deem necessary; (2) establish and maintain within the
389 department such school libraries as may from time to time be required
390 in connection with the educational courses, services and programs
391 authorized by this section; (3) purchase, receive, hold and convey
392 personal property for school purposes and equip and supply such
393 schools with necessary furniture and other appendages; (4) make
394 agreements and regulations for the establishing and conducting of the
395 district's schools and employ and dismiss, in accordance with the
396 applicable provisions of section 10-151, such teachers as are necessary
397 to carry out the intent of this section and to pay their salaries; (5)
398 receive any federal funds or aid made available to the state for such
399 programs and shall be eligible for and may receive any other funds or
400 aid whether private, state or otherwise, to be used for the purposes of
401 this section.

402 (c) The superintendent of the school district may cooperate with the
403 federal government in carrying out the purposes of any federal law
404 pertaining to the education of students within his school district, and
405 may adopt such methods of administration as are found by the federal
406 government to be necessary, and may comply with such conditions as
407 may be necessary to secure the full benefit of all such federal funds

408 available.

409 [(d) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall annually
410 evaluate the progress and accomplishments of the school district
411 established in accordance with subsection (a) of this section. Said
412 commissioner shall submit annual evaluation reports to the
413 Commissioner of Education in order to apprise the State Board of
414 Education of the true condition, progress and needs of said school
415 district. Said commissioner shall follow procedures adopted by the
416 Commissioner of Education in preparation of annual evaluation
417 reports.]

418 Sec. 10. Section 17a-22c of the general statutes is repealed and the
419 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

420 (a) The Commissioner of Children and Families and the
421 Commissioner of Social Services shall establish performance measures
422 in the areas of finance, administration, utilization, client satisfaction,
423 quality and access for Connecticut Community KidCare.

424 (b) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall develop and
425 implement, within available appropriations, culturally appropriate
426 and competency-based curricula including best practices for the care of
427 children and youths with, or at risk of, behavioral health needs and
428 offer training to all willing persons involved in Connecticut
429 Community KidCare, including, but not limited to, employees in
430 education and child care and appropriate employees within the
431 judicial system.

432 [(c) The Commissioners of Children and Families and Social
433 Services shall, within available appropriations, design and conduct a
434 five-year independent longitudinal evaluation with evaluation goals
435 and methods utilizing an independent evaluator. The evaluation shall
436 assess changes in outcomes for individual children, youths and
437 families, evaluate the effectiveness of the overall initiative in the early
438 phases to guide future expansion of Connecticut Community KidCare
439 and examine benefits, costs and cost avoidance achieved by it. Such

440 evaluation may include, but is not limited to, the following: (1)
441 Utilization of out-of-home placements; (2) adherence to system of care
442 principles; (3) school attendance; (4) delinquency recidivism rates; (5)
443 satisfaction of families and children and youths with Connecticut
444 Community KidCare as assessed through client satisfaction surveys;
445 (6) coordination of Connecticut Community KidCare with the juvenile
446 justice, child protection, adult behavioral health and education
447 systems; and (7) the quality of transition services.]

448 Sec. 11. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2009*) (a) The Commissioner of
449 Children and Families and the Chief Court Administrator shall
450 establish, within available appropriations, a pilot program to integrate
451 the initial written plan for care, treatment and permanent placement of
452 children and youth required under section 17a-15 of the general
453 statutes, with the specific steps for family reunification ordered by the
454 court pursuant to subsection (j) of section 46b-129 of the general
455 statutes. The Commissioner of Children and Families, in consultation
456 with said Chief Court Administrator, shall designate one Department
457 of Children and Families area office to participate in the pilot program.
458 The pilot program shall terminate not later than October 1, 2011.

459 (b) A court services officer of the court participating in the pilot
460 program shall be responsible for convening a meeting to promptly
461 develop the initial treatment plan and proposed specific steps for the
462 child and family, and shall invite the parents or guardians, the child or
463 youth, when appropriate, and their respective attorneys, department
464 staff responsible for developing and implementing treatment plans,
465 and individuals involved in assessing needs and providing services for
466 the child and family. Whenever possible, such meetings shall be
467 convened at times and held in places that maximize the likelihood that
468 children, youth and their parents or guardians will be able to attend.

469 (c) Following the meeting, the court shall order specific steps that
470 the parent must take to facilitate the return of the child or youth to the
471 custody of such parent. In addition to satisfying the requirements set
472 forth in subsection (a) of section 17a-15 of the general statutes for the

473 Department of Children and Families' written plan for the care,
474 treatment and permanent placement of every child under the
475 commissioner's supervision, the plan shall also include, but not be
476 limited to: (1) Assessment of the health and welfare of the child or
477 youth; (2) an evaluation of the problems and strengths of each child or
478 youth; (3) the proposed plan of treatment services and temporary
479 placement, and a goal for permanent placement of the child or youth;
480 and (4) specific planning goals and clear, comprehensive, time-
481 sensitive action steps for educational and behavioral health needs.

482 (d) The Commissioner of Children and Families and the Chief Court
483 Administrator shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the
484 general statutes, to the joint standing committees of the General
485 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services and
486 judiciary and the select committee of the General Assembly having
487 cognizance of matters relating to children not later than February 1,
488 2012, concerning the results of such pilot program. The report shall
489 also include a recommendation on whether the program should be
490 expanded state-wide.

491 Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) The Department of Children
492 and Families shall collect and analyze data to determine the percentage
493 of the department's cases of child abuse and neglect that involve a
494 parent or guardian with a substance abuse problem and utilize such
495 data to develop strategies to reduce the number of such cases in the
496 future.

497 Sec. 13. Subsection (b) of section 17a-450a of the general statutes is
498 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
499 *1, 2009*):

500 (b) The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services shall
501 constitute a successor department to the addiction services component
502 of the Department of Public Health and Addiction Services. Whenever
503 the words "Commissioner of Public Health and Addiction Services" are
504 used or referred to in the following general statutes, the words
505 "Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services" shall be

506 substituted in lieu thereof and whenever the words "Department of
 507 Public Health and Addiction Services" are used or referred to in the
 508 following general statutes, the words "Department of Mental Health
 509 and Addiction Services" shall be substituted in lieu thereof: 4a-12, [17a-
 510 3,] 17a-465a, 17a-670 to 17a-676, inclusive, 17a-678 to 17a-682, inclusive,
 511 17a-684 to 17a-687, inclusive, 17a-691, 17a-694, 17a-710, 17a-712, 17a-
 512 713 19a-89c, 20-74o, 20-74p, 20-74q, 21a-274a, 54-36i and 54-56g.

513 Sec. 14. Sections 17a-6b, 17a-6c, 17a-21, 17a-91a, 17a-116b and 46b-
 514 121m of the general statutes are repealed. (*Effective July 1, 2009*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-3
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-6(b)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-27f
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	46a-13l
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-4
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-22b(a)
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-145
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-37
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-22c
Sec. 11	<i>October 1, 2009</i>	New section
Sec. 12	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	New section
Sec. 13	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17a-450a(b)
Sec. 14	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	Repealer section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In section 3(b), the phrase "as required by" was changed to "submitted pursuant to" for accuracy and clarity. In section 12, "per cent" was changed to "percentage" for proper grammar.

JUD *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

Sections 1-4, 6-10, and 12-14 make numerous substantive and technical changes related to: (a) DCF's planning efforts; (b) the structure and role of advisory councils to the Commissioner of Children and Families; and (c) various reporting mandates involving DCF. Taken as a whole, these changes can be accommodated within the department's normally budgeted resources.

Section 5 requires any state agency cited in an official report issued by the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) to submit a written response within 60 days after it receives the report. These provisions will not result in a fiscal impact to OCA or other state agencies.

Section 11 establishes a pilot program (which would expire no later than 10/1/11) at one court location to combine the first treatment plan meeting, which is usually held at a DCF area office, with the initial case status conference in a pending neglect case, which is held at a courthouse. Under the bill, a court services officer must convene these meetings. Consolidation of these conferences will result in no fiscal impact to either agency.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Sources: 2/26/09 Public Hearing Testimony; File 174 of the 2008 Session.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6475*****AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE
CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to develop a strategic plan and a timeframe for meeting the plan's goals. The strategic plan replaces the department's ongoing five-year master plan.

The bill establishes a family reunification pilot program in DCF area office in cooperation with the chief court administrator. The program's goal is to help plan specific steps for families and children to take so they can be reunited.

The bill expands the role of the State Advisory Council on Children and Families. It requires any agency the child advocate cites in a report to submit a written response. It requires, instead of allows, DCF to appoint advisory groups for each of its facilities.

The bill requires DCF to collect data on its child abuse and neglect cases related to substance abuse and use it to develop strategies to reduce these cases in the future.

It eliminates three DCF committees and eight types of reports and also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2009, except for the family reunification pilot program, which takes effect October 1, 2009.

DCF STRATEGIC PLAN

The bill removes the requirement that DCF submit a five-year

master plan on a biennial basis. The master plan includes:

1. the long-range goals and the current level of attainment of the department's goals;
2. a detailed description of the types and amounts of services presently provided to the department's clients;
3. a detailed forecast of the service needs of current and projected target populations;
4. detailed cost projections for alternate means of meeting projected needs;
5. funding priorities for each of the plan's five years and specifics indicating how the funds are to be used;
6. a written plan for the prevention of child abuse and neglect;
7. a comprehensive mental health plan for children and adolescents, including children with complicating or multiple disabilities;
8. a comprehensive plan for children and youths who are substance abusers, developed in conjunction with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services pursuant to the provisions of CGS § 19a-2a and 19a-7; and
9. an overall assessment of the adequacy of children's services in Connecticut.

The plan shall be prepared within existing funds appropriated to the department.

Instead, the bill requires DCF, with assistance from the State Advisory Council on Children and Families and in consultation with representatives of the children and families the department serves, service providers, and advocates, to develop and regularly update a single, comprehensive strategic plan for meeting the needs of children

and families DCF serves. When developing and updating the plan, DCF must identify and define agency goals and progress indicators, including benchmarks. The plan must include:

1. DCF's mission statement;
2. expected results for the department and each of its mandated areas of responsibility;
3. a schedule for achieving the expected results and fulfilling the department's mission, including strategies for working with other state agencies to leverage resources and coordinate services;
4. priorities for services and estimates for the funding and other resources necessary to carry them out;
5. standards for programs and services that are based on research-based best practices, when available; and
6. relevant performance measures.

DCF must (1) begin the strategic planning process on July 1, 2009 and hold regional meetings to receive public input; (2) post the plan, updates, and progress reports to its website; (3) submit the plan to the advisory council for review and comment; and (4) submit a final version to the General Assembly and governor by July 1, 2010.

The DCF commissioner must report to the advisory council on progress in achieving the strategic plan's goals by October 1, 2010 and then quarterly thereafter. She must annually submit a status report on progress to the General Assembly and governor beginning July 1, 2011.

PILOT PROGRAM FOR FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The bill requires the DCF commissioner and chief court administrator to establish a pilot family reunification program within available appropriations. The pilot must integrate the initial written plan for a child's care, treatment, and permanent placement with

specific steps the court orders for family reunification. The commissioner, in consultation with the chief court administrator, must designate one DCF area office to participate in the program, which must end by October 1, 2011.

A court support services officer from the court participating in the pilot program must convene a meeting to develop promptly the initial treatment plan and propose specific steps for the child and family. The officer must invite to the meeting the child's parents or guardians; the child, when appropriate; their respective attorneys; the DCF staff person responsible for developing and implementing treatment plans; and service providers. Meetings must be held at a time and place convenient to the family and child whenever possible.

After the meeting, the court must order specific steps the parents must take to facilitate the child's return to their custody. In addition to the standard treatment plan, which covers diagnosis, treatment services, temporary placement, and a guide for permanent placement, this plan must include:

1. a health and welfare assessment of the child;
2. an evaluation of the child's problems and strengths;
3. the proposed plan of treatment services and temporary placement, and a goal for permanent placement of the child; and
4. specific planning goals and clear, comprehensive, time-sensitive action steps for educational and behavioral health needs.

The DCF commissioner and the chief court administrator must report the pilot program's results to the Children's, Human Services, and Judiciary committees by February 1, 2012. The report must include a recommendation about expanding the program statewide.

ADVISORY GROUPS

State Advisory Council on Children and Families

The bill requires that two of the 17 members of the State Advisory Council on Children and Families be between the ages of 18 and 25 served by DCF. It requires the member who is an attorney to have expertise in legal issues relating to children and specifies that the child services in which some members must be interested include child protection, behavioral health, juvenile justice, and prevention services.

The bill requires DCF to fund (1) the participation of the members who represent children and families and (2) administrative support. By law, council members are not paid but receive compensation for necessary expenses.

The bill requires the council's meetings to be held in locations that facilitate public participation and its meeting agendas and minutes be posted on the DCF website.

The bill adds the following additional duties for the council:

1. make recommendations about children's behavioral health programs and legislation to the DCF commissioner;
2. assist in the development of, and review and comment on, DCF's strategic plan;
3. receive the commissioner's quarterly status reports about DCF's progress in carrying out its strategic plan;
4. independently monitor DCF's progress in achieving its goals as expressed in the strategic plan; and
5. offer assistance and provide an outside perspective to enable DCF to achieve the strategic plan's goals.

ANNUAL FACILITY REPORTS

The bill requires, rather than allows, DCF to appoint an advisory group for each facility it operates and requires each facility to report annually to the state advisory council and its advisory group. The five facilities are:

1. the Riverview Hospital for Children and Youth,
2. the Connecticut Juvenile Training School,
3. Connecticut Children's Place,
4. High Meadows, and
5. the Wilderness School.

The report must include:

1. aggregate profiles of the residents;
2. a description of and update on major initiatives;
3. key outcome indicators and results;
4. facility operation costs; and
5. a description of educational, vocational, and literacy programs and behavioral, treatment, and other services available to the residents and their outcomes.

Each facility's report must be posted on DCF's website.

The bill requires each facility advisory group to review its facility's report and give any recommendations for improvement or enhancement deemed necessary. DCF serves as administrative staff for the group.

COMMITTEES ELIMINATED

The bill eliminates DCF's:

1. Connecticut Juvenile Training School Public Safety Committee to review and safety and security issues affecting Middletown, the school's host town;
2. Connecticut Juvenile Training School's advisory group; and

3. Advisory Committee on Adoption and Provision of Services to Minority Children.

CHILD FATALITY REPORTS

The bill requires any state agency the child advocate cites in a report to submit a written response within 60 days of receiving the report to (1) the child advocate, (2) the governor, and (3) the General Assembly. If the advocate's report is about an investigation of a child fatality, the response must also go to the Child Fatality Review Panel. The response must include (1) proposed corrective actions to address identified problems and (2) a timeframe for implementing improvements.

ELIMINATED REPORTS

The bill eliminates the following reports:

1. an annual report from the DCF commissioner to the Children's, Human Services, and Judiciary committees that details (1) who is in the department's care, why, and where they are housed; (2) police reports about those in DCF's care; (3) and progress on the construction of new facilities;
2. an annual report from the DCF commissioner to Children's, Human Services, and Judiciary committees about the Connecticut Juvenile Training School that includes information about resident demographics and diagnoses, recidivism rates, costs, and programs and policies;
3. quarterly reports to the DCF commissioner from psychiatric and general hospitals providing psychiatric care to children that include the date of and reason for admission, diagnosis, date of birth, sex, town of residence, and date of discharge of all children who have been admitted and treated for a psychiatric illness;
4. a monthly report from DCF to the Human Services and Public Health committees on the number of children and adolescents in DCF custody who (1) are in subacute care in freestanding

- psychiatric or general hospitals and (2) cannot be discharged due to the lack of appropriate placements in the community;
5. an annual self-evaluation process and a review of discharge summaries from community collaboratives (local consortiums of public and private health care providers, parents and guardians of children with behavioral health care needs, and service and education agencies);
 6. DCF's annual evaluation to the education commissioner of its unified school district, including condition, progress, and needs;
 7. an annual report to the DCF commissioner by each licensed child care facility detailing the number of children received and removed during the year, the number and causes of deaths, the average per capita cost of support, and any other data the commissioner requests; and
 8. a five-year study conducted by the DCF and Department of Social Services commissioners assessing changes in outcomes for individual children, youths, and families; evaluating the effectiveness of the early phases of Connecticut Community KidCare to guide future expansion of the program; and examining benefits, costs, and cost-avoidance it achieved.

Evaluation of Costs and Benefits of Juvenile Offender Programs Eliminated

The bill eliminates the law requiring an agreement between the chief court administrator and the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council to evaluate the costs and benefits of programs serving juvenile offenders offered by private providers or state or municipal agencies in reducing recidivism. The report was finished in 2002.

It also eliminates the related advisory board composed of the Correction and DCF commissioners and the chief court administrator, or their designees, and the chairpersons and ranking members of the Judiciary and Human Services committees

BACKGROUND***Advisory Committee on Adoption and Provision of Services to Minority Children***

This advisory group:

1. studies, develops, and evaluates programs and projects relating to community awareness and education, family support, counseling, parenting skills and education, and reform of the child welfare system;
2. consults with churches and other cultural and civic organizations; and
3. reports annually to DCF on recommendations for programs and projects to promote the adoption of and provision of services to minority children.

DCF must currently report in odd-numbered years to the General Assembly on the committee's recommendations and the actions DCF has taken to implement them.

Related Bill

sSB 877 (File 290) implements recommendations from the Program Review and Investigations Committee. It also eliminates many of the same reporting requirements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Program Review and Investigations Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference

Yea 11 Nay 0 (03/05/2009)

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/17/2009)

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 43 Nay 0 (04/14/2009)